

Washington State
Department of Financial Institutions
Mark Thomson, Acting Director
Division of Consumer Services
(360) 902-8760 <http://www.dfi.wa.gov/>

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Mark Thomson - (360) 902-8787

Washington Borrowers Get \$79,000 in Refunds
From California Mortgage Lender

Olympia 2/12/02 - Checks totaling more than \$79,000 have been sent to 242 Washington consumers this month by the Consumer Services Division of the Department of Financial Institutions. The checks are refunds of inappropriate charges and fees collected by Unicor Funding, Inc., a California-based mortgage lender with offices in Portland, Oregon. Consumers receiving refunds reside primarily in King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap counties.

The size of the checks ranges from \$125 to \$3272, with the average check amounting to \$327. The total amount being refunded is \$79,331.95. Cities where the recipients live include Marysville, Federal Way, Renton, Kent, Auburn, Tacoma, Puyallup, Silverdale, Bremerton, and Seattle.

During a routine examination of the company's books, department auditors found that the company charged inappropriate loan fees not allowable under Washington law. The department asked Unicor to search its records for all loans made with fees not allowed under Washington's Consumer Loan Act and make sure that refunds were made to all affected consumers.

Under department scrutiny, licensees usually provide refunds directly to consumers. When Unicor failed to do so, the department took the refund money from the surety bond the company had posted as a requirement of doing business here. The company is no longer doing business in Washington.

"We are pleased to be able to return these funds to Washington consumers," said Mark Thomson, acting director of the Department of Financial Institutions. "State law protects

consumers from such overcharges, and the Legislature has wisely required all licensees to maintain a bond," he said.

The Division of Consumer Services regulates mortgage lenders and consumer loan companies and conducts periodic reviews of their books and records to make sure they comply with applicable state and federal lending laws. The division also regulates mortgage brokers, escrow companies, and check cashers and sellers.
